



SOUTHWEST MISSOURI COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
Executive Committee Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, December 10, 2024
3:00 p.m.
Alumni Center 2nd Floor Conference

Attendees: Allen Kunkel, Jerry Harman, Bill Monday, Nathan Piche, Duane Lavery, Howard Fisk, Steve Childers, and Todd Wiesehan

Zoom Attendees: Cindy Stephens & Wayne Blades

Staff: Jason Ray, Courtney Pinkham, and Morganza Byrd

Open Meeting – Allen Kunkel

1. **Approval of December 10, 2024, Agenda** – Allen Kunkel

Motion made by Bill Monday and seconded by Duane Lavery to approve the December 10, 2024, Agenda. Motion carried.

2. **Approval of November 12, 2024, Minutes** – Allen Kunkel

Motion made by Howard Fisk and seconded by Cindy Stephen to approve the November 12, 2024, Minutes with the following corrections: Morganza Byrd in attendance and Cindy Stephens made the call for approval of agenda and minutes. Motion carried.

3. **Bank Transfers** – Jason Ray

There were no transfers to review.

6. **Monett Comprehensive Plan Contract** – Jason Ray

Jason requested authorization to sign the contract when it is finalized. The proposal included several options as requested by the City.

-Steve Childers asked if we were not able to accommodate any of Monett's requests for this plan.

-Jason stated, yes, Monett originally requested a retail study and architectural renderings, but these are not typically included in a comprehensive plan and would be best as separate projects. Monett has been working with an Economic Development professional from Kansas City. They are also looking at changing the form of government they currently run as a commission form of government. They are the only community left in Missouri to have a commission form of government.

Motion made by Steve Childers and seconded by Todd Wiesehan to authorize Jason Ray to sign this contract. Motion carried.

5. EPA SWIFR Grant Application – Jason Ray

Jason requested authorization to submit an application to the EPA Solid Waste Infrastructure for Recycling (SWFR) Grant program. We will be partnering with Solid Waste Management Region N on this grant since they are not classified as a political subdivision. The proposal is to construct a food waste recycling center in Stone County and collection locations throughout the Region N 5-county area.

Motion made by Cindy Stephens and seconded by Bill Monday to authorize Jason Ray to sign the agreement. Motion carried.

6. HB 1779 Discussion – Jason Ray

Jason stated there are a few bills in the house to increase the cap for funding given to RPCs. The current bill breaks out KC and STL into a separate category. Jason was asked by a representative if he felt that SMCOG should be separated like KC and STL. The Committee discussed the potential to be included in the same category as the Kansas City and St. Louis regions. No one stated they were against the change.

7. 2025 Meeting Calendar – Jason Ray

Jason stated that Duane had been brought up to possibly move our Board meeting to allow legislators to attend our meeting. March would be the only board meeting that would be affected by this change.

Motion made by J Howard Fisk and seconded by Duane Lavery to change the SMCOG March Board Meeting date to 03/28/2025 so it does not conflict with the legislation session. Motion carried.

8. Staffing Update – Jason Ray

Jason introduced Morganza, SMCOG's new fiscal officer. He also announced Jake Phillips took a position with Christian County. This means we have 2 positions open, one a Senior Planner and one an Associate Planner, Jason stated that he is opening 2 positions to cast a wider net. The first date of consideration is this coming Monday, we have a few applications for the associate planner position.

-Howard stated that one of our duties is to help train our interns and staff to help produce good employees for our communities.

-Bill asked who was handling the Dallas County Comprehensive plan in Jake's absence.

-Jason stated that Thomas is working on this project.

9. Office Relocation Update – Jason Ray

Jason announced that we are officially in our temporary home at University Hall. Sometime around April, we will move to our final destination at Blunt Hall. They are planning on infilling furniture and even though the walls are moveable, they are soundproof walls, so we will be able to shift the walls to add additional offices as needed.

10. Program/Project Updates – Jason Ray

Jason stated that they had the MoDOT SWMO District priority meeting. Taney County Route 86 improvements, including HWY 65, Christian County HWY 65 improvements, Taney County

HWY 65 in Branson, Dallas County HWY 65, Christian/Lawrence/Barry County US 60 MO 37, Stone/Christian County HWY 13, and Webster County Hwy 60 placed in the top 17. They also broke out a few small projects, Taney County Mo 76, and Webster County Rt DD made it on this list. Jason had asked Aishwarya to work with the interns to show the last 10 years of TAC needs lists combined. MoDOT found out we were working on this, and now they are working on a similar project. MoDOT stated that SWMO District has had the most projects programmed in the STIP than any other part of the state in the last 10 years. Jason stated we hosted our first MMTAC meeting last month. We were going to vote on the MMTAC committee members at the December SMOG Board meeting, but that meeting was canceled. Jason stated he is ok with this as he would like to curate a few more committee members. The group did work on bylaws for the committee. MoDOT has the LPA program and requires entities that receive any funding from these programs to be LPA certified. SMOG's grants and environmental Manager, Kelsi, recently completed this certification. Jason stated he is working on getting MoDOT to allow RPCs to assist Communities with administrating these funds to help keep projects moving faster. MoDOT has appointed Ed Hassinger as the new director. Director Hassinger was asked to form an advisory council; Jason did put his name in the hat.

Jason has been participating in the working groups for the statewide CEDS on Community Infrastructure. He stated that Governor-Elect Kehoe was in attendance and stated he would use this for guidance, MoDED's Director was also in attendance and stated they would also use the statewide CEDS as the Department's priorities. Jason stated there was one item brought up, someone from Jasper County, asked what if a region did not have a COG, how would this be handled. This is due to HSTCC, who has stepped away from MACOG. Jason talked to this person separately and stated that SMOG was available for guidance.

-Allen stated that it is impressive that we have two individuals from our region leading the statewide CEDS working groups, Jason and Rachel Anderson

-Jason brought up there is a Community Action Agency in Clinton, that started NewGrowth, we have been asked to apply for EPA funding as a subapplicant under NewGrowth, but apparently, some Communities in our region were added to the application without the community's knowledge. NewGrowth is trying to prop up a policy group, the Missouri Rural Development Partnership (MRDP), utilizing the EPA group to work on a community project. This is not the purpose of MRDP.

-Duane stated that Marshfield/Webster County was having public transportation issues, and they were approached by NewGrowth to try and assist with these issues. However they have a transportation group that they work with already, so they declined the offer from NewGrowth.

-Jason stated we are in the public engagement stage of our transportation study for Webster County. EDA funding is up for reauthorization, there is a cap for the EDA Partnership Planning support at \$70k, and they are looking to increase to \$200k a year and lowering the match. This will also re-authorize the Delta Regional Authority (DRA), which we are just outside of. Jason mentioned that MCCoE is presenting at MACOG's meeting. Hollister's admin Rick Ziegenfuss is retiring, they will be looking to fill that position.

11. Adjourn